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by
STERN,
PEREZ,
GAMMILL &
BREEDING

SUPERMAN
FEATURED IN

ACTION

COMICS

**MAXIMA
MAKES HER MOVE!**



THE DAY OF THE
KRYPTON
PART III
MAN



WHY...
YES!

FINE.

SOMETIMES A JOB
SEEMS TO CHANGE
A MAN.



"... HE MIGHT AS WELL BE FROM ANOTHER PLANET!"

NOT OF THIS EARTH

PERRY WHITE WAS RIGHT... THE JOB OF AN EDITOR IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A REPORTER.

"ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR PEOPLE," HE SAID.

MY PEOPLE WHISPER ABOUT ME BEHIND MY BACK, AND THINK I CANNOT HEAR. THEY... FEAR ME.

STILL, IF FEAR YIELDS THE RESULTS I DESIRE... SO BE IT.

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SUPERMAN CREATED BY
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER

CERTAINLY, THIS COVER FEATURE I ASSIGNED HAS MORE THAN MET MY EXPECTATIONS.

WITH THE RECENT INVASION STILL ON EVERYONE'S MIND, WE MUST REMIND HUMANITY...

...THAT SOME OF THIS WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES ARE THEMSELVES ALIENS.

BEINGS FROM SO MANY DIFFERENT WORLDS HAVE ADAPTED TO EARTH'S CULTURES AND MADE HOMES HERE...



"...KINDS OF BO'OX AND NUMEROUS OTHER GREEN LANTERNS..."

"...STARFIRE, THE EXILED TITAN OF TAMARAN..."

"...J'ONN J'ONZZ, MANHUNTER FROM ANCIENT MARS..."

"...NOT TO MENTION THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF THE PLANET KRYPTON!"

I HAD THE ADVANTAGE, OF COURSE, OF BEING BORN AND RAISED IN THIS WORLD. IT WAS JUST BARELY TWO YEARS AGO THAT I MYSELF LEARNED THAT MY TRUE GENETIC HERITAGE IS KRYPTONIAN!

MANY OF THIS WORLD'S PEOPLES ARE YET UNAWARE THAT SUPERMAN IS NOT NATIVE TO EARTH...

...JUST AS THEY DO NOT REALIZE THAT MUSTER MIRACLE AND HIS WIFE MARCIA COME FROM THE DISTANT WORLDS OF NEW GENESIS AND ARKOLURS!



IF ONLY ALL OF EARTH'S ALIEN CONTACTS WERE SO BENEFICIAL! BUT, THAT WOULD BE LIKE WISHING ALL HUMANS TO BE RATIONAL.

RECENTLY, I'VE FACED ONE ALIEN MENACE AFTER ANOTHER...

"SOME, LIKE LOBO, SEEMED DETERMINED TO PROVE THAT THE EARTH HOLDS NO MONOPOLY ON CASUAL, THOUGHTLESS VIOLENCE."

OTHERS HAVE BEEN TOTAL MYSTERIES. LIKE THAT FOUR-ARMED TERROR...

...OR THAT ANTARCTIC MONSTER! IT WAS PRACTICALLY MINDLESS, MORE A FORCE OF NATURE THAN A LIVING THING!

"AND THEN, THERE WAS BRAINIAC..."

...CLEARLY IN A CLASS BY HIMSELF... A TRULY MALEVOLENT MIND! HIS ESCAPE INTO SPACE IS STILL INFURIATING! IN FACT...

"...THE ONLY ALIEN FOX I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SUBDUCE AND CAPTURE OF LATE WAS GAZU! AND SHE REMAINS A PUZZLE!"

NOW, FROM WHAT I HEAR, SHE'S TOLD A PUBLIC DEFENDER THAT WHAT SHE DESTROYED WAS MERELY A SIMULACRUM OF MAXIMA.

SO LIFELIKE A CONSTRUCT WOULD INDICATE AN INCREDIBLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY! YET, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

AND ASSUMING THAT GAZU'S CLAIMS ARE TRUE...

"AT FIRST, SHE ACTED SUBSERVIENT TO THAT OTHER MYSTERY WOMAN -- MAXIMA -- BUT THEN THEY HAD SOME SORT OF ARGUMENT ABOUT ME AND GAZU APPEARED TO DESTROY HER!"

"... WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE REAL MAXIMA? APPARENTLY, SHE WANTED SOMETHING OF ME, BUT WHAT? AND WHERE IS SHE NOW?"

ENTERING STATIONARY ORBIT

AT LAST!

HOW IRONIC THAT A BEING OF SO VITAL A BLOODLINE AS SUPERMAN SHOULD LIVE ON SUCH A BACKWATER WORLD, SO FAR FROM ESTABLISHED STAR-ROUTES!

WITH ONLY AUTOMATED SYSTEMS FOR COMPANY, THE TRIP SEEMED ENDLESS. I WOULD HAVE BROUGHT LIVING SERVITORS, BUT AFTER SAZU'S BETRAYAL --

-- I TRUST NONE BUT ELECTRONIC UNDERLINGS.

PREPARE ME FOR PLANETFALL! BEGIN ENCAPSULATION!

AS YOU COMMAND

ENCAPSULATION COMPLETED

PLANETFALL RELEASED IN 5... 4... 3...

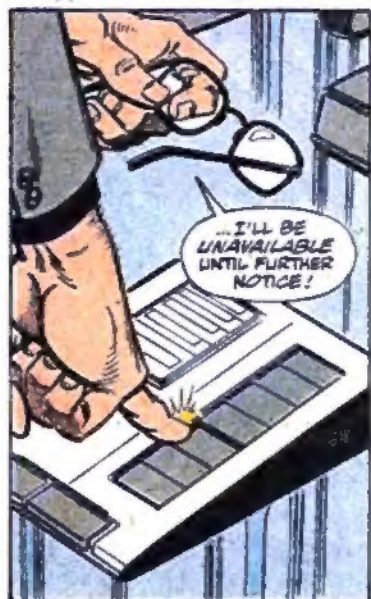
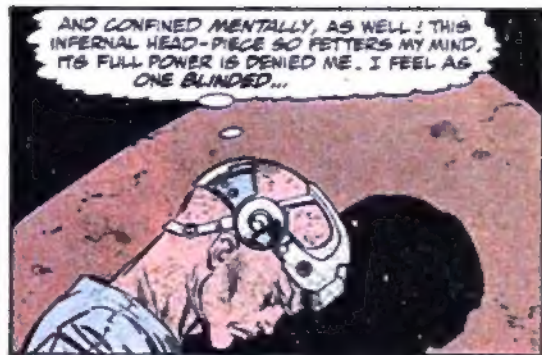
-- 2... 1... AWAY!

BUT YOU SHALL PAY FOR THAT INSOLENCE--

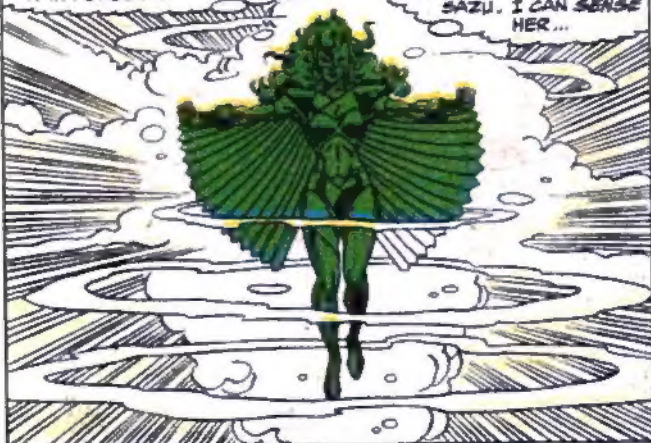
SAZU! NOT IN A THOUSAND GENERATIONS HAS ANYONE OF OUR ROYAL HOUSE SUFFERED SUCH AN INDIGNITY AT THE HANDS OF A... MENIAL!

I AM COMING FOR YOU, FAITHLESS ONE! YOU INTERFERED WITH MY CHOSEN DESTINY!

-- MOST DEARLY!

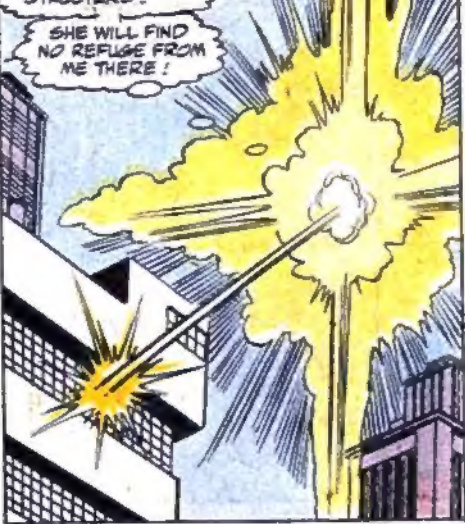


AH... METROPOLIS! PRIMITIVE IT MAY BE, BUT STILL IT IS A CITY... WITH ALL THE ATTENDANT SOUNDS AND SMELLS. HOW GOOD TO AT LAST EXPERIENCE IT IN PERSON!



MY FLAGSHIP'S INSTRUMENTS FUNCTIONED FLAWLESSLY. THE TRAJECTORY THEY PLOTTED HAS DELIVERED ME WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF SAZU. I CAN SENSE HER...

...IN THAT FORTIFIED STRUCTURE!



SHE WILL FIND NO REFUGE FROM ME THERE!

SO, SAZU, WE ARE AGAIN TOGETHER. AND THIS TIME YOU DO NOT FACE AN UNDERPOWERED PROXY!



MERCY, MY LADY, I AM UNDESERVING OF YOUR RAGE!

YOU DEFIED MY WILL! YOU DESTROYED MY SIMULACRUM BEFORE IT COULD FORGE A MENTAL BOND BETWEEN MYSELF AND SUPERMAN!



MY LADY... PLEASE! I DID SO ONLY OUT OF DUTY

...TO PROTECT YOU! HE IS NOT A WARRIOR WORTHY OF THE BLOOD ROYAL!



AND I SAY HE IS! YOUR INSUFFERABLE MIDDLING IS OVER!

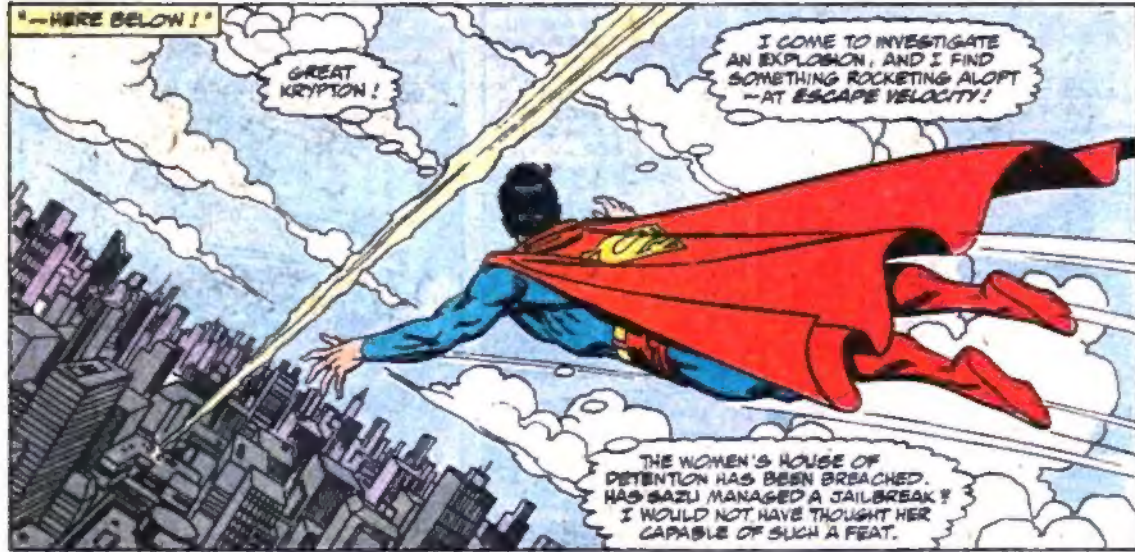
NO... NO...! SILENCE!



YOUR PUNISHMENT AWAITS OFF-PLANET! I HAVE MORE PLEASANT TASKS BEFORE ME--



—HERE BELOW!



GREAT
KRYPTON!

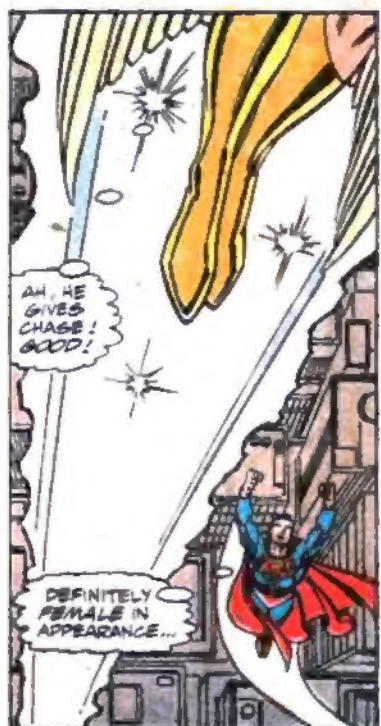
I COME TO INVESTIGATE
AN EXPLOSION, AND I FIND
SOMETHING ROCKETING ALOFT
—AT ESCAPE VELOCITY!

THE WOMEN'S HOUSE OF
DETENTION HAS BEEN BREACHED.
HAS SAZU MANAGED A JAILBREAK?
I WOULD NOT HAVE THOUGHT HER
CAPABLE OF SUCH A FEAT.



SUPERMAN! I COULD
SCARCELY HAVE PLANNED
THIS BETTER!

EH? AND
WHO IS
THIS?



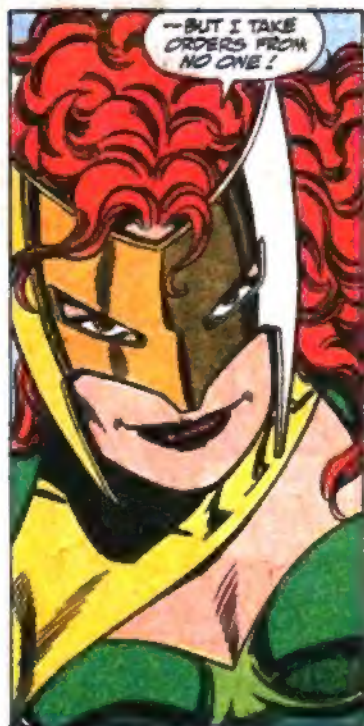
AH, HE
GIVES
CHASE!
GOOD!

DEFINITELY
FEMALE IN
APPEARANCE...



STOP! I
WANT A WORD
WITH YOU!

DO YOU,
HDEED? I
WOULD CHASE
YOU, MAN-OF-
STEEL...



—BUT I TAKE
ORDERS FROM
NO ONE!



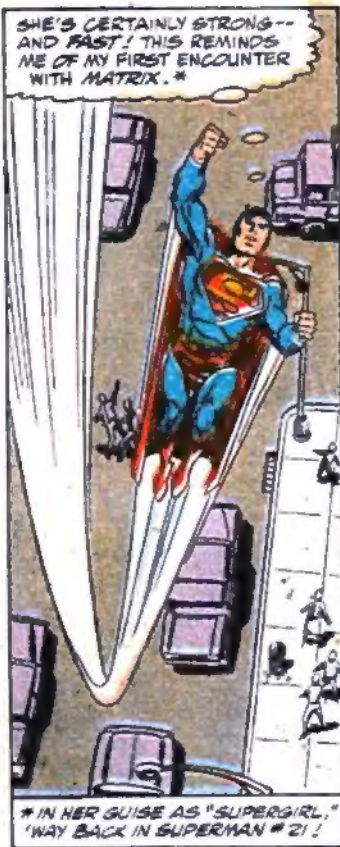
WHO DO YOU THINK--?

I AM YOUR BETTER--



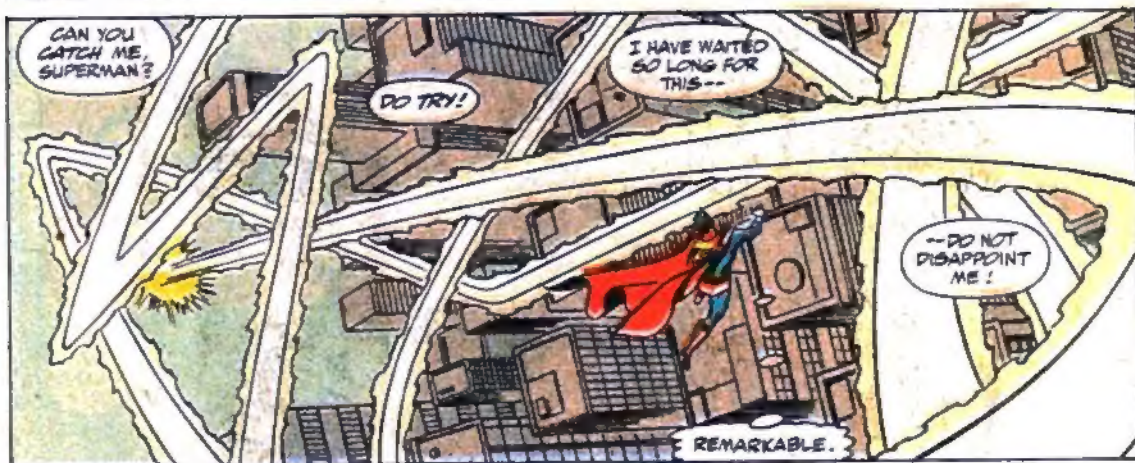
--AS YOU SHALL LEARN!

?!?



SHE'S CERTAINLY STRONG-- AND FAST! THIS REMINDS ME OF MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH MATRIX.*

* IN HER GUISE AS "SUPERGIRL," WAY BACK IN SUPERMAN # 21!



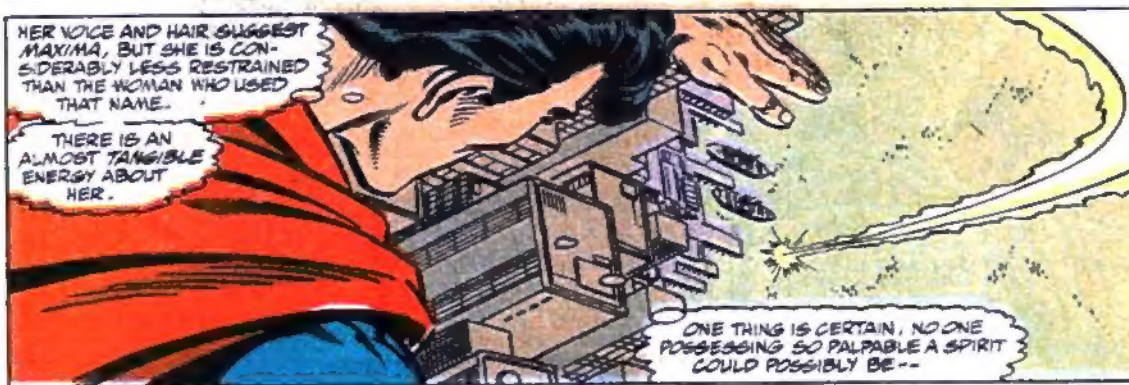
CAN YOU CATCH ME, SUPERMAN?

DO TRY!

I HAVE WAITED SO LONG FOR THIS--

--DO NOT DISAPPOINT ME!

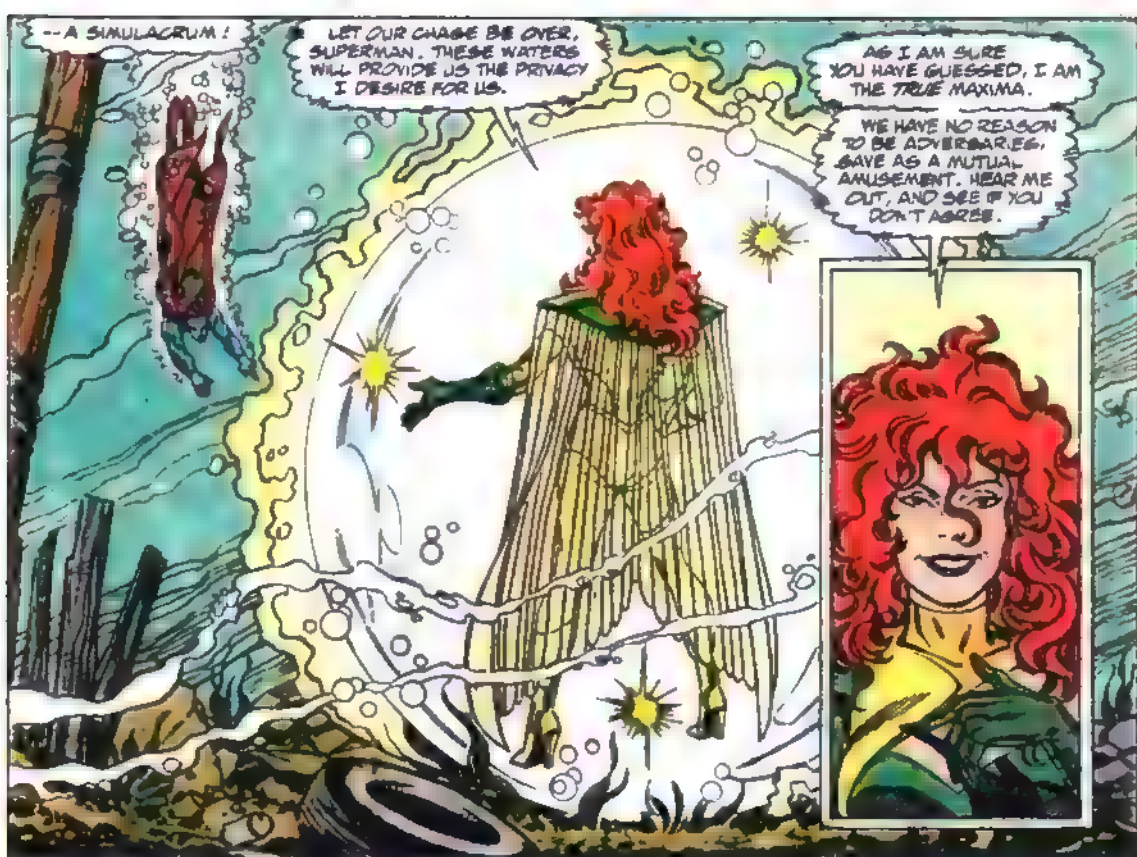
REMARKABLE.



HER VOICE AND HAIR SUGGEST MAXIMA, BUT SHE IS CONSIDERABLY LESS RESTRAINED THAN THE WOMAN WHO USED THAT NAME.

THERE IS AN ALMOST TANGIBLE ENERGY ABOUT HER.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN, NO ONE POSSESSING SO PALPABLE A SPIRIT COULD POSSIBLY BE--

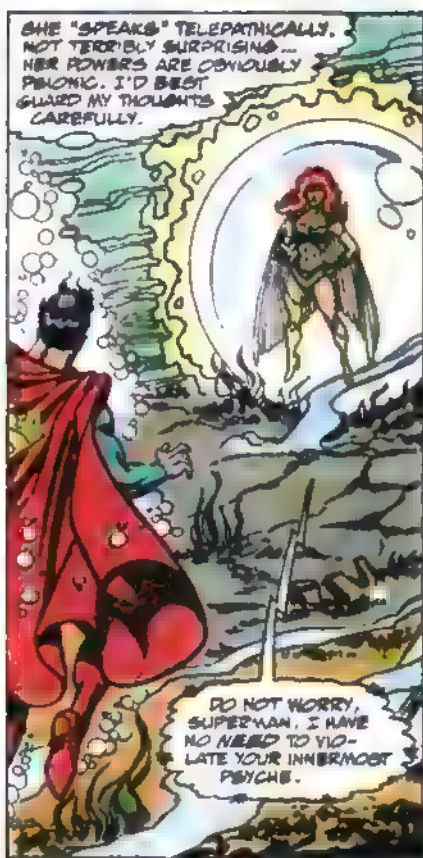


-- A SIMULACRUM !

LET OUR CHASE BE OVER,
SUPERMAN. THESE WATERS
WILL PROVIDE US THE PRIVACY
I DESIRE FOR US.

AS I AM SURE
YOU HAVE GUESSED, I AM
THE TRUE MAXIMA.

WE HAVE NO REASON
TO BE ADVERSARIES,
SAVE AS A MUTUAL
AMUSEMENT. HEAR ME
OUT, AND SEE IF YOU
DON'T AGREE.



SHE "SPEAKS" TELEPATHICALLY.
NOT TERRIBLY SURPRISING --
HER POWERS ARE OBVIOUSLY
PSYCHIC. I'D BEST
GUARD MY THOUGHTS
CAREFULLY.

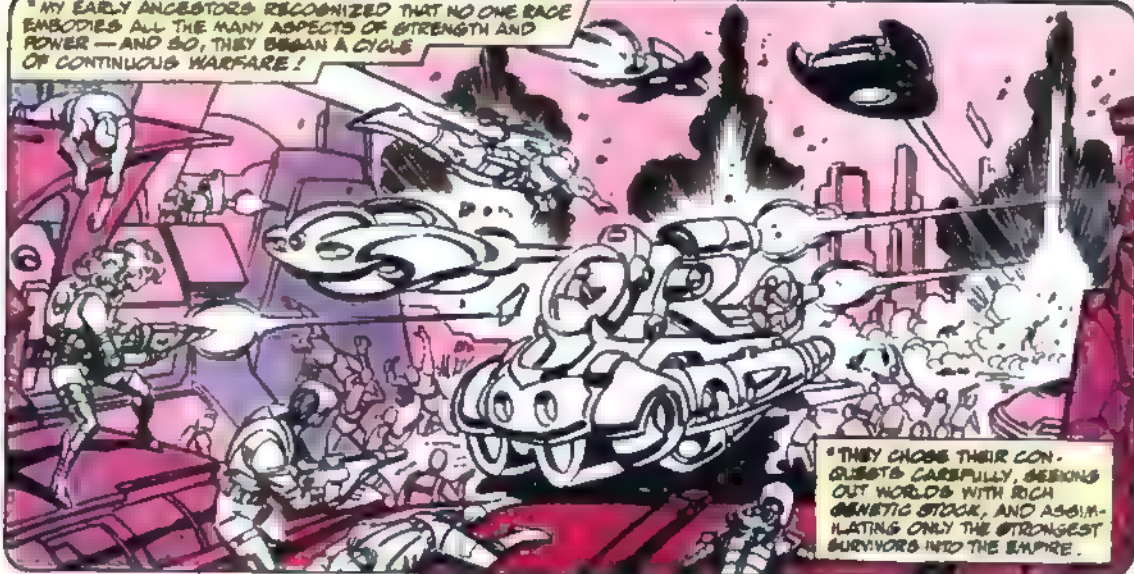
DO NOT WORRY,
SUPERMAN. I HAVE
NO NEED TO VIOLATE
YOUR INNERMOST
PSYCHE.



KNOW YOU THAT I AM OF A HEARTY,
STAR-SPANNING PEOPLE --

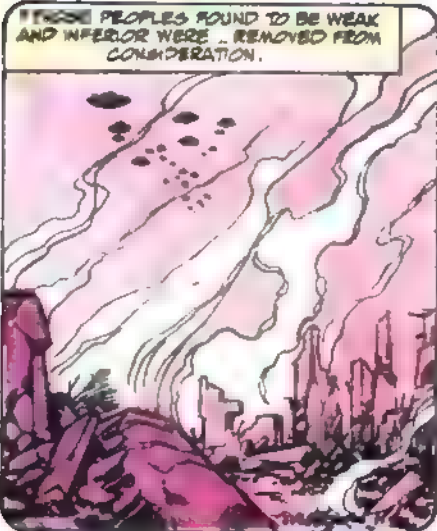
"... MY FAMILY HAS SPENT MILLENNIA
FORGING A RICH EMPIRE THROUGHOUT
OUR GALAXY. OUR POWER IS LIMITLESS,
OUR RIVALS BUT FEW."

"MY EARLY ANCESTORS RECOGNIZED THAT NO ONE RACE EMBODIES ALL THE MANY ASPECTS OF STRENGTH AND POWER — AND SO, THEY BEGAN A CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS WARFARE!"



"THEY CHOSE THEIR CON-
QUESTS CAREFULLY, SEEKING
OUT WORLDS WITH RICH
GENETIC STOCK, AND ASSIM-
ILATING ONLY THE STRONGEST
SURVIVORS INTO THE EMPIRE."

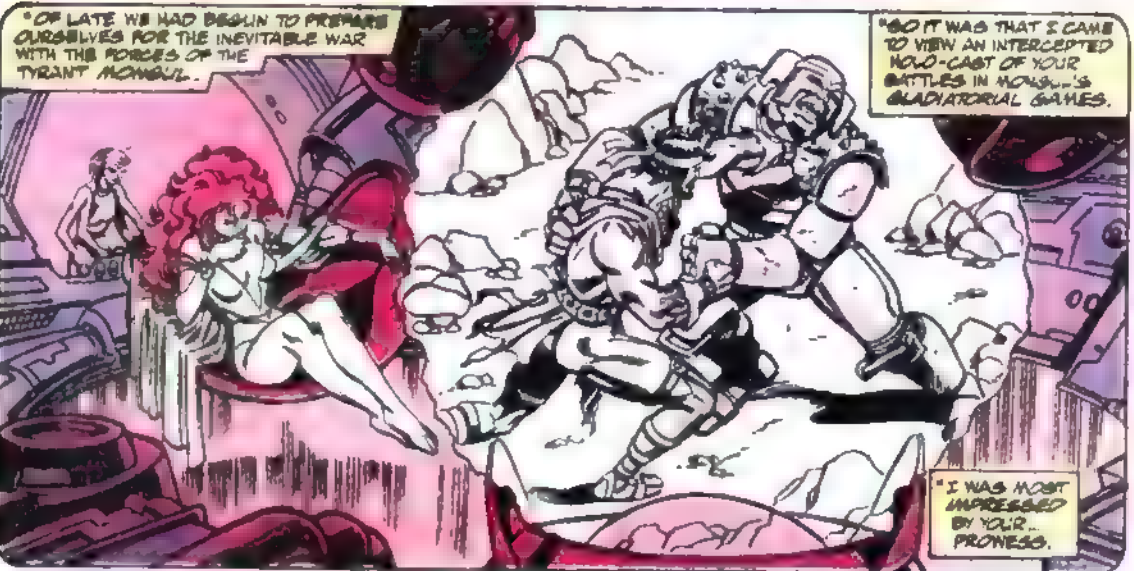
"THESE PEOPLES FOUND TO BE WEAK
AND INFERIOR WERE... REMOVED FROM
CONSIDERATION."



"MY OWN IMPERIAL BLOODLINE IS THE PRIDE RESULT OF
GENERATIONS OF SELECTIVE BREEDING. UNFORTU-
NATELY, THE RECENT GENERATION OF PROSPECTIVE
MATES HAS BEEN MOST DISAPPOINTING."



"OF LATE WE HAD BEGUN TO PREPARE
OURSELVES FOR THE INEVITABLE WAR
WITH THE FORCES OF THE
TYRANT MONGUL."



"SO IT WAS THAT I CAME
TO VIEW AN INTERCEPTED
HOLD-CAST OF YOUR
BATTLES IN MONGUL'S
GLADIATORIAL GAMES."

"I WAS MOST
IMPRESSED
BY YOUR...
PROMISE."

"YOUR STRENGTH AND SKILL WERE WELL DISPLAYED IN YOUR TOPPING OF THE CHAMPION DRAAGA. AND YOUR REFUSAL TO OBEY MONGUL'S KILL ORDER INTRIGUED ME..."



"...THOUGH, FROM THE FIRST MY HANDMAIDEN SAZU THOUGHT MY INTEREST NEPLUCLABLE."

"YOU FIND THE KRYPTONIAN APPEALING, MY LADY? BUT SUCH MERCY AS HE SHOWS CAN BE A FATAL FLAW IN A WARRIOR."

"PERHAPS. BUT HE SHOWS DEFINITE POTENTIAL"

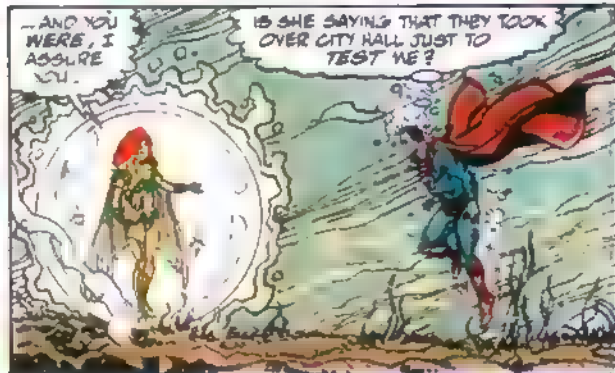


"DISMISSING SAZU'S DOUBTS - I DECIDED TO INVEST GAZE YOU MYSELF"



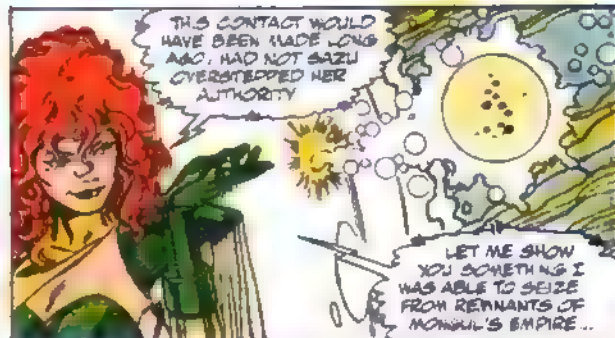
"...AND YOU WERE, I ASSURE YOU."

"IS SHE SAYING THAT THEY TOOK OVER CITY HALL JUST TO TEST ME?"

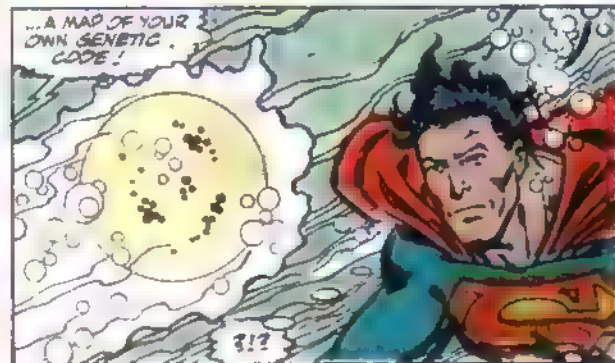


"THIS CONTACT WOULD HAVE BEEN MADE LONG AGO, HAD NOT SAZU OVERTESTED HER AUTHORITY"

"LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING I WAS ABLE TO SEIZE FROM REMNANTS OF MONGUL'S EMPIRE..."

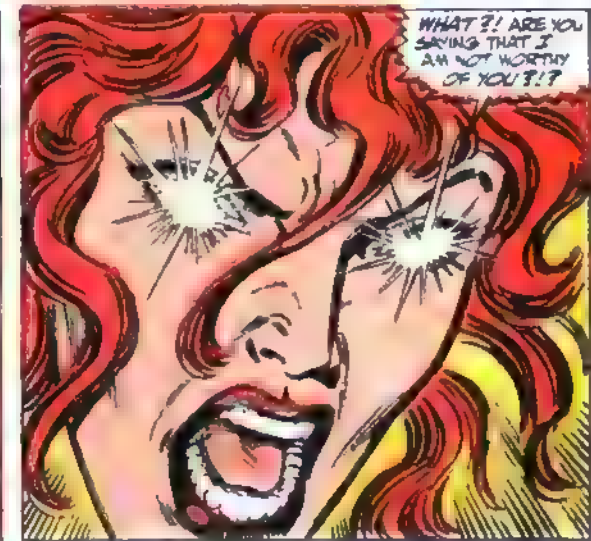
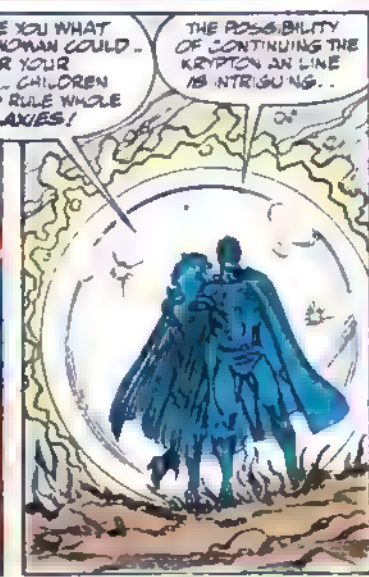
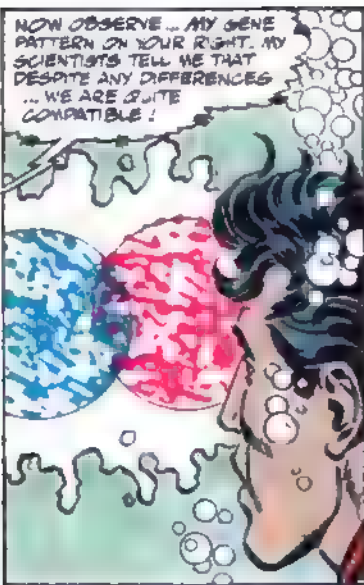


"...A MAP OF YOUR OWN GENETIC CODE!"

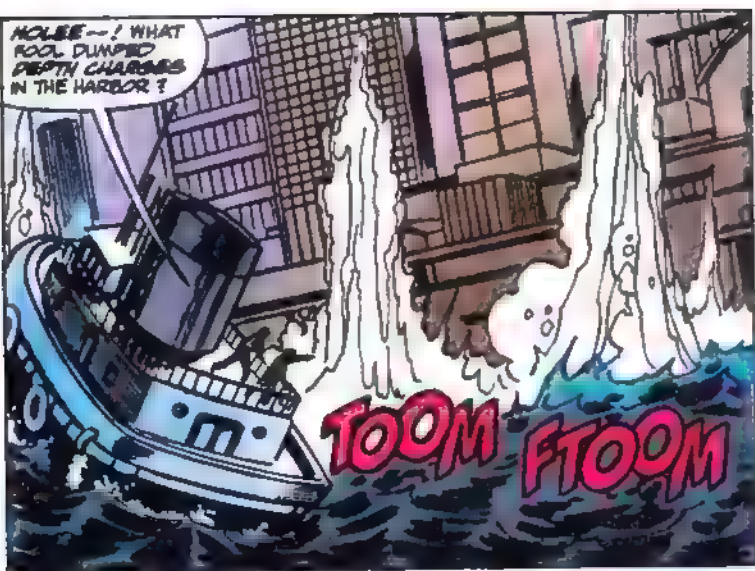


"...BUT THE DISSOLUTION OF MONGUL'S RULE -- TRIGGERED IN NO SMALL PART BY YOUR ACT OF DEFIANCE -- DEMANDED MY IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. THUS, I ORDERED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SIMULACRUM..."

"...A NEAR-PERFECT DOUBLE OF MYSELF THAT COULD SEEK YOU OUT AND ENTICE YOU TO JOIN ME ON MY WORLD OF A-MERAG, IF YOU WERE FOUND WORTHY..."



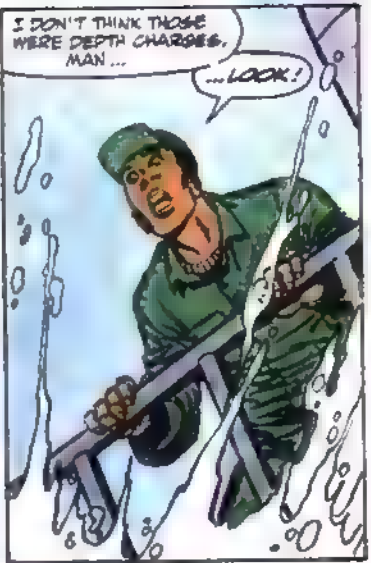
NOISE--! WHAT
FOOL DUMPED
DEPTH CHARGES
IN THE HARBOR?



TOOM FTOOM

I DON'T THINK THOSE
WERE DEPTH CHARGES,
MAN...

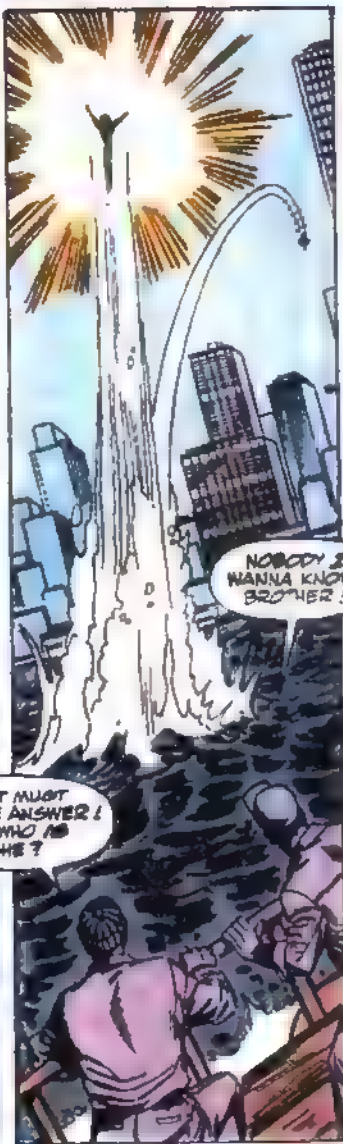
...LOOK!



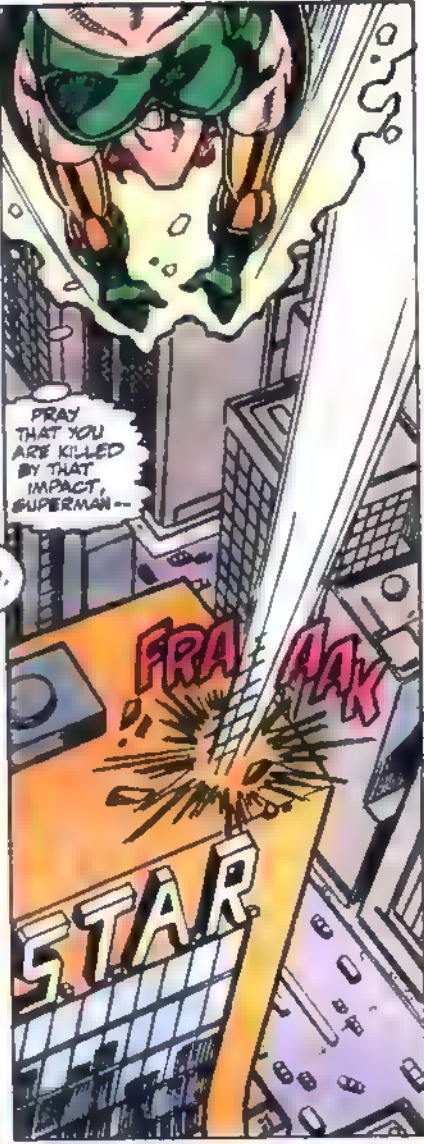
"SUPERMAN?!! GREAT DAY IN
THE MORNIN' -- WHAT COULDA
DONE THAT TO HIM?!"



THAT MUST
BE THE ANSWER!
BUT... WHO IS
SHE?



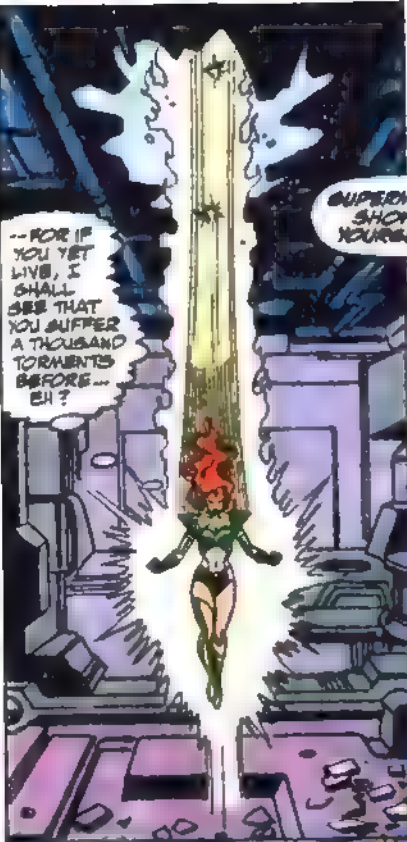
NOBODY I
WANNA KNOW,
BROTHER!



PRAY
THAT YOU
ARE KILLED
BY THAT
IMPACT,
SUPERMAN--

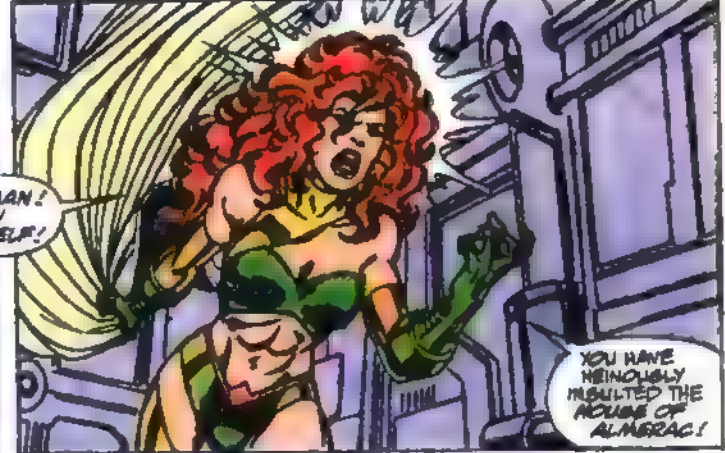
FRA AAK

STAR

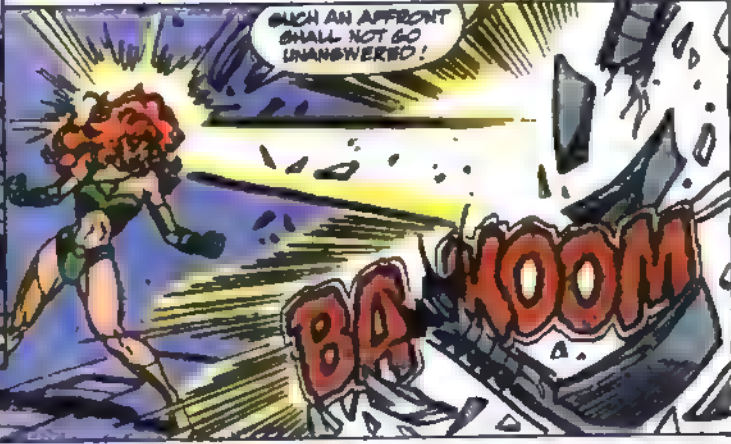


--FOR IF YOU YET LIVE, I SHALL SEE THAT YOU SUFFER A THOUSAND TORMENTS BEFORE... EH?

SUPERMAN! SHOW YOURSELF!

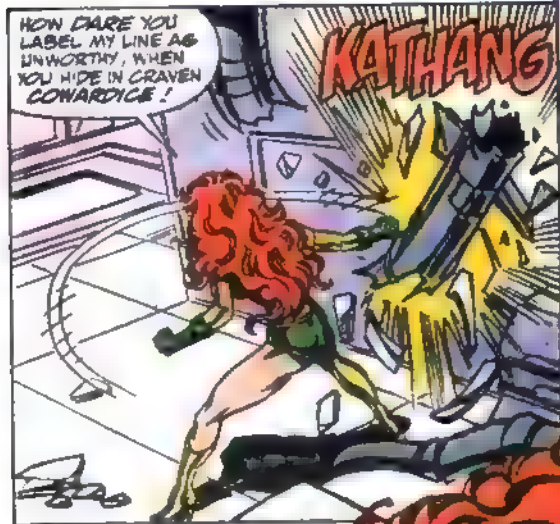


YOU HAVE MEINFULLY INSULTED THE HOUSE OF ALMERAC!



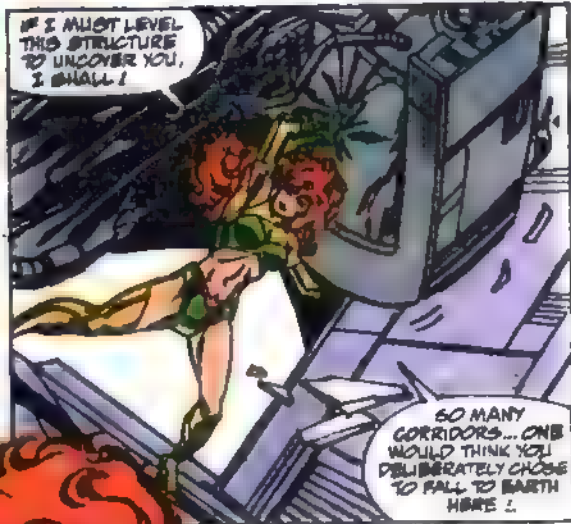
SUCH AN AFFRONT SHALL NOT GO UNANSWERED!

BA-KOOM



HOW DARE YOU LABEL MY LINE AS UNWORTHY, WHEN YOU HIDE IN CRAVEN COWARDICE!

KATHANG



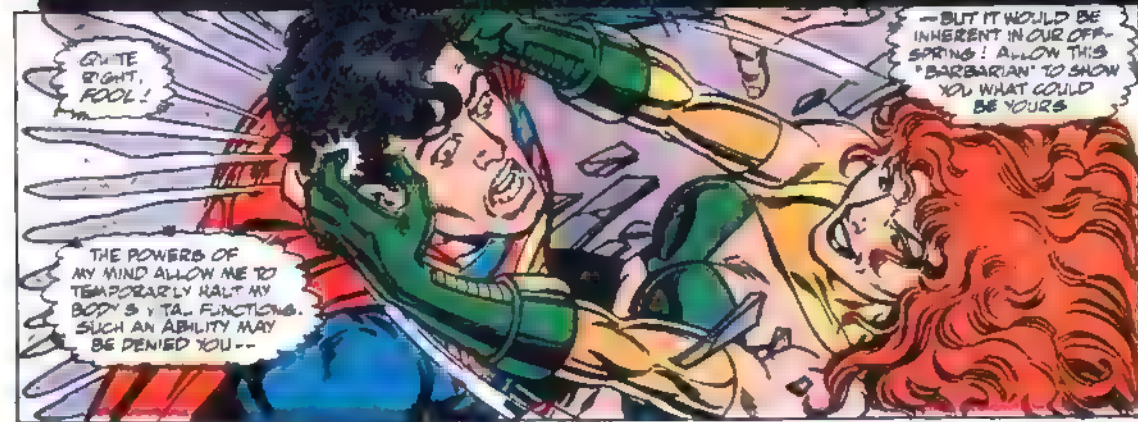
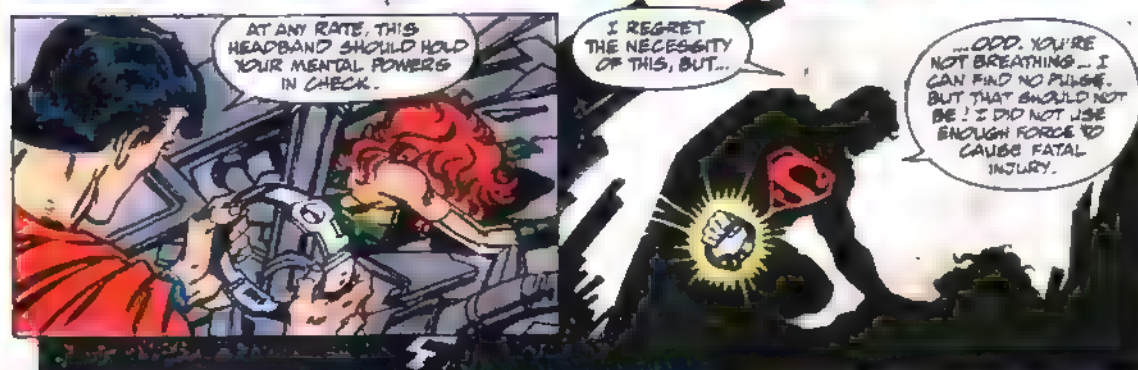
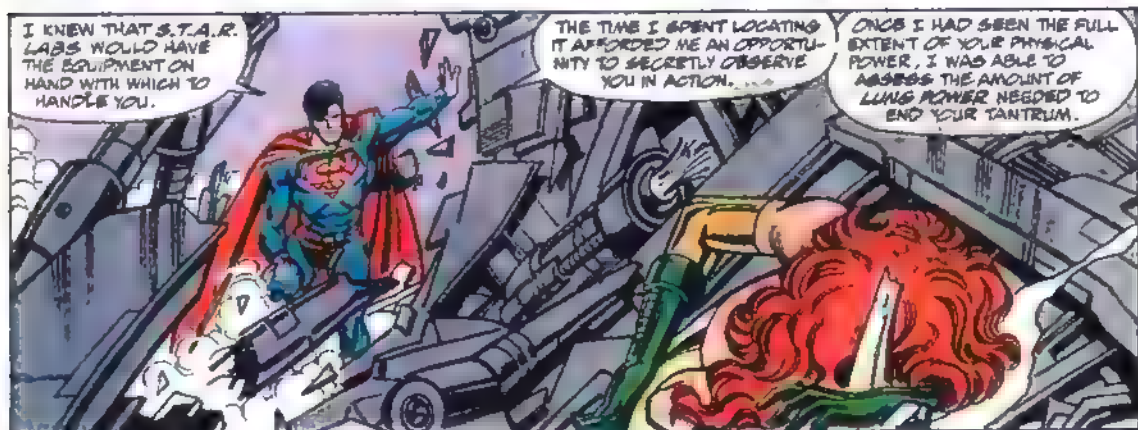
IF I MUST LEVEL THIS STRUCTURE TO UNCOVER YOU, I SHALL!

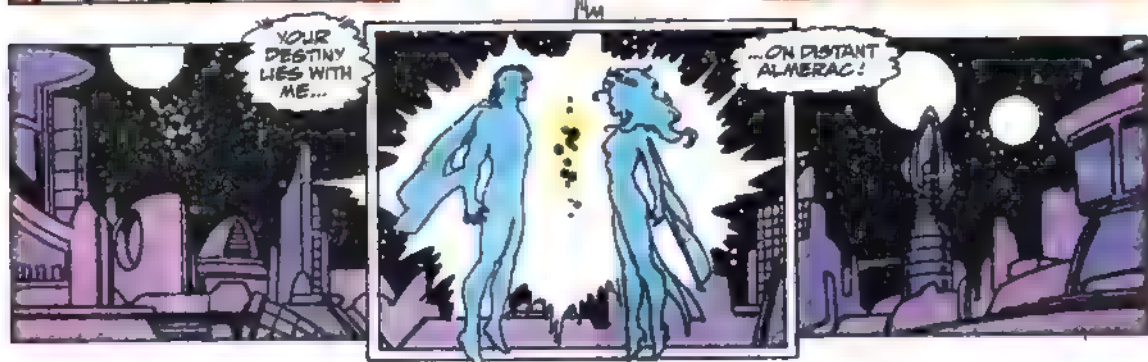
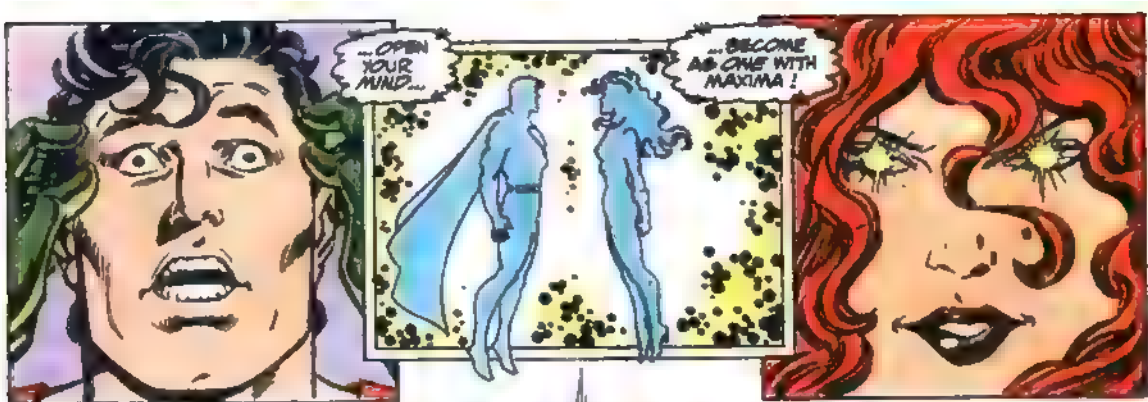
SO MANY CORRIDORS... ONE WOULD THINK YOU DELIBERATELY CHOOSE TO FALL TO EARTH HERE!



I DID, MAXIMA

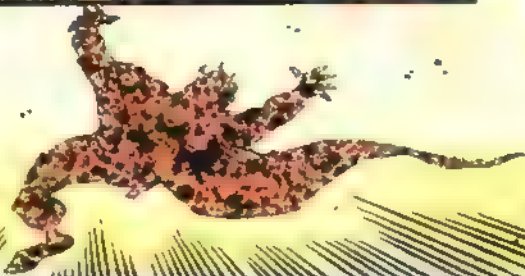
WHAT--?





I WILL
HAVE NO
PART OF
IT!

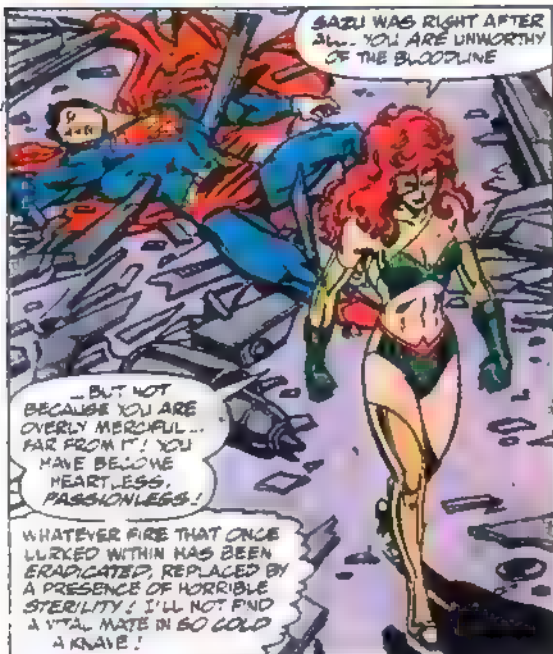
AND I
WILL HAVE
NO PART
OF YOU!



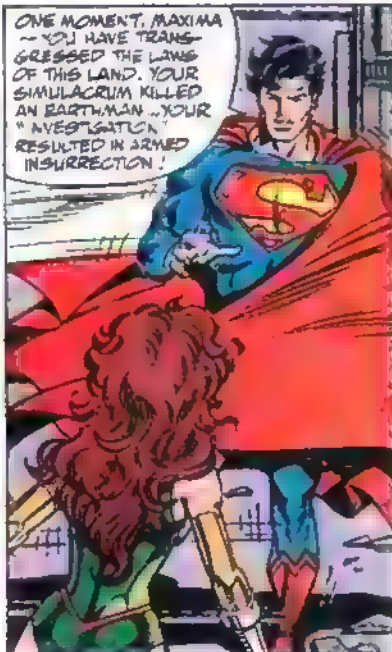
SABU WAS RIGHT AFTER
ALL... YOU ARE UNWORTHY
OF THE BLOODLINE

...BUT NOT
BECAUSE YOU ARE
OVERLY MERCIFUL...
FAR FROM IT! YOU
HAVE BECOME
HEARTLESS,
PASSIONLESS!

WHATEVER FIRE THAT ONCE
LURKED WITHIN HAS BEEN
ERADICATED, REPLACED BY
A PRESENCE OF HORRIBLE
STERILITY! I'LL NOT FIND
A VITAL MATE IN SO COLD
A KNAVE!



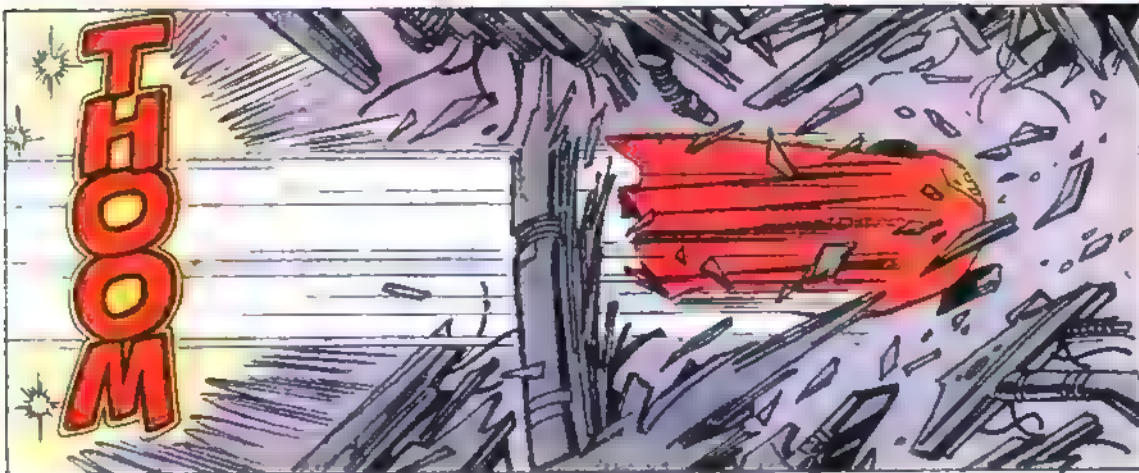
ONE MOMENT, MAXIMA
-- YOU HAVE TRANS-
GRESSED THE LAWS
OF THIS LAND. YOUR
SIMULACRUM KILLED
AN EARTHMAN... YOUR
"INVESTIGATION"
RESULTED IN ARMED
INSURRECTION!

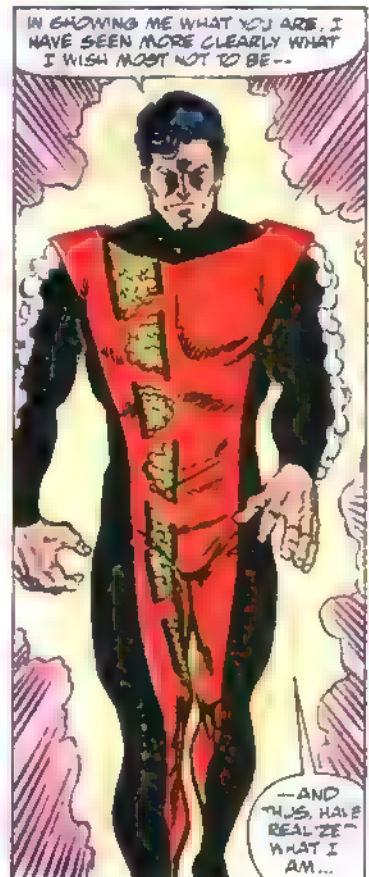
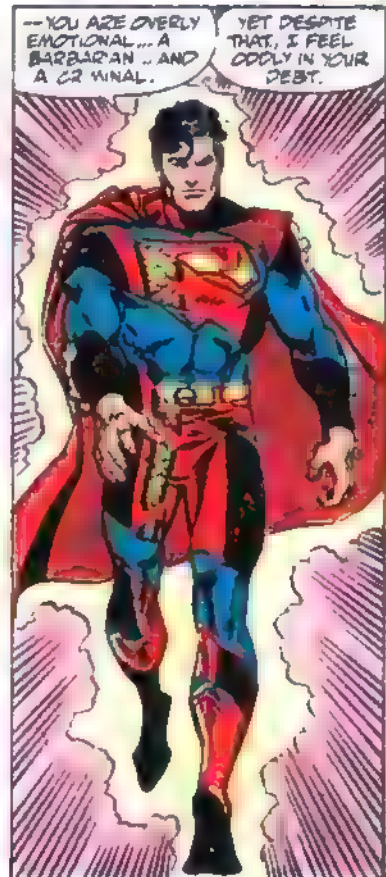
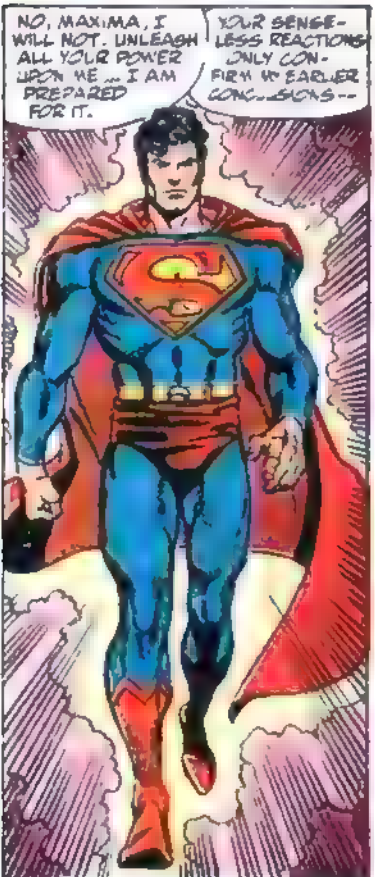
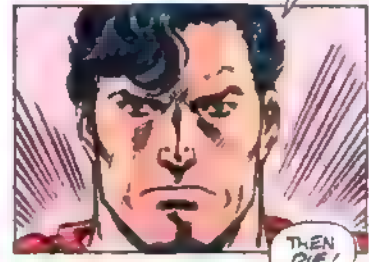
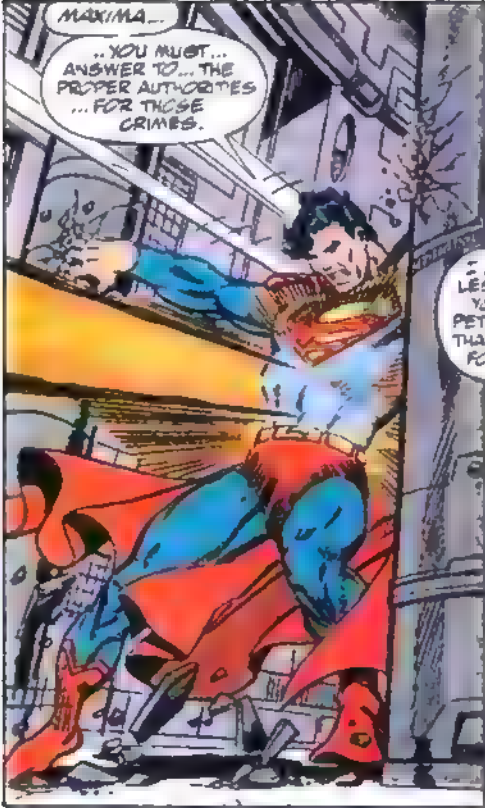


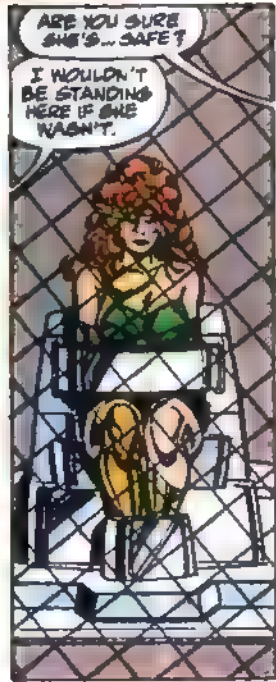
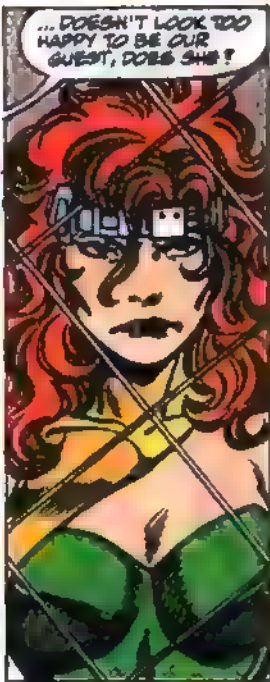
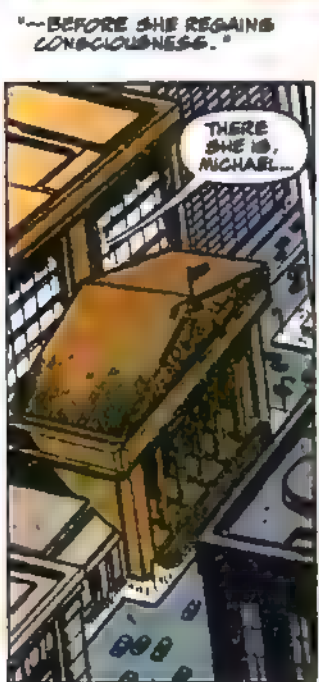
GET OUT
OF MY
WAY!



THOOM









WITH THE VISIBILITY HER TRIAL WILL HAVE... WHY, THE MAN WHO PROSECUTES HER WILL BECOME A HOUSEHOLD WORD!

AND MAYBE THE NEXT GOVERNOR?

STRANGER THINGS HAVE HAPPENED.



I HATE TO BURST YOUR BUBBLE, MORTON...

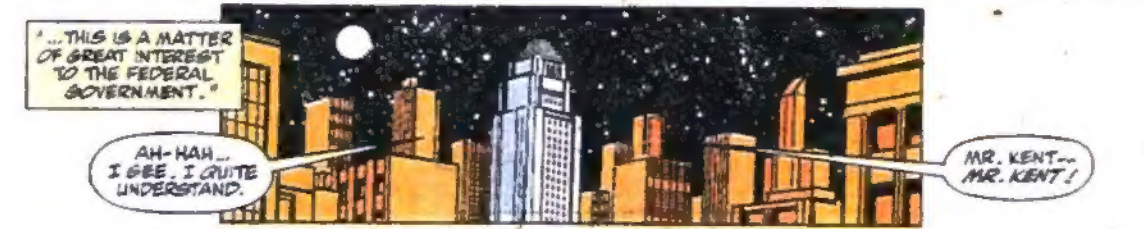
MAYOR BERKOWITZ! I... I WAS JUST...

YES, YES... IF I WERE D.A., I'D BE ENTERTAINING SIMILAR THOUGHTS.



BUT THE CASE IS BEING TAKEN OUT OF OUR HANDS. THIS IS WARREN AVERY OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

YES, AS MAXIMA IS APPARENTLY A HEAD OF STATE...



"...THIS IS A MATTER OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT."

AH-HAH... I GEE, I QUITE UNDERSTAND.

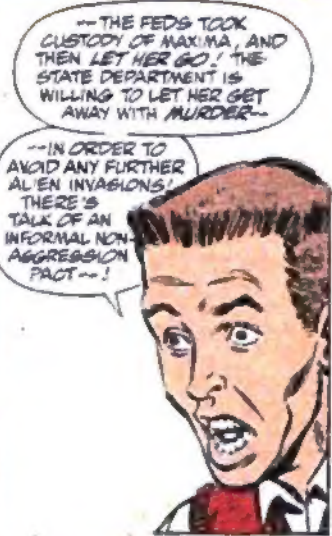
MR. KENT... MR. KENT!



JUST A MOMENT, PLEASE.

JEREMY, I'M ON THE PHONE.

SORRY TO INTERRUPT, MR. KENT, BUT WE JUST GOT A MAJOR NEWS LEAK--



--THE FEDS TOOK CUSTODY OF MAXIMA, AND THEN LET HER GO! THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS WILLING TO LET HER GET AWAY WITH MURDER--

--IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY FURTHER ALIEN INVASIONS! THERE'S TALK OF AN INFORMAL NON-AGGRESSION PACT--!



I AM AWARE OF THAT, JEREMY. I AM ON THE PHONE TO WASHINGTON NOW. THEY HAVE CONFIRMED THE STORY AND ASKED US TO SOFT-PEDAL IT... AND I AGREED.

THAT IS THE PRUDENT COURSE.



I DON'T BELIEVE THIS! AND HE WAS A BIG DEAL NEWSPAPERMAN?

"I WONDER WHAT SUPERMAN'D SAY IF HE KNEW?"



IF THE HIGHEST LEGAL AUTHORITY IS SATISFIED, IT IS A RATIONAL COURSE... TO ALLOW MAXIMA TO LEAVE EARTH...

"...TO RETURN
TO THE STARS..."

"...AND NEVER
THREATEN THIS
WORLD AGAIN."

♪ Doo-doo-
Doo-doo-DOO ♪

♪ (TRANSITRON'S
CONNECTED TO THE
RAD-SHIELD... RAD-
SHIELD PROVIDES
US WITH THE
GLO-FIELD!) ♪

♪ (GLO-FIELD
PROTECTS US FROM
NUC-YIELD... AND
THAT'S WHAT POWERS
US A-LONG!) ♪

♪ (OOOOO, THE
TRANSITRON---!) ♪

(ENOUGH!)

(WHO-O-DA!)

(HOW MUCH
LONGER WILL
REPAIRS
TAKE?)

(T-TAKE IT EASY,
DRAAGA! I-I'M
ALMOST FINISHED!)

(WE'LL BE
BACK ON OUR
WAY TO EARTH
BEFORE YA
KNOW IT!)

(SEE THAT WE
ARE! I MUST
FIND SUPERMAN.
I MUST HAVE
HIS HEAD...)

(...OR DIE
IN THE
TRYING!)

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO SUPERMAN? FIND OUT NEXT MONTH--IN SUPERMAN #42... ADVENTURES #465... AND ACTION #652! PLUS: DRAAGA WALKS THE EARTH! KAL-EL REBORN! BATTLE ON THE MOON! MA AND PA KENT GO TO METROPOLIS! AND A FINAL, FATEFUL RECKONING! THE LEGEND LIVES ON!

RE:ACTION

DC COMICS INC.

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L-5330

Dear Mike and Jon:

Just a few lines of acknowledgement concerning ACTION COMICS #646, "Burial Ground":

Classic. Many thanks to Keith Giffen for helping out Mr. Perez during his recent illness (I hope George is better). Anyway, about this story, the plot and pencils were unforgettable. I enjoyed Keith Giffen's Man of Steel—powerful and mature-looking. An economy of linework. Can I believe it, Kal-El with messy hair? A real, believable rendering, gentlemen.

Roger Stern's scripting was on-line with the plot. My favorite page was the one where, after being blasted by the "Dino-slug" and then freeing himself, an extremely upset Superman bellows, "That does it!" Another instance when Superman really took it to the monster was when he thought, "You're pretty tough ... so am I." Beautiful. Accompanied by Keith's art, these few words spoke volumes.

I like the back-to-basics approach taken in all three "Super" titles. My thanks and appreciation go out to all the creative personnel associated with the Man of Tomorrow, especially the coordinating editor.

Keep up the good—no, excellent—work.

Kevin Conley
28 Clarke Street
Lawrence, MA 01841-2119

Mike:

I remember what it was like when I first started reading comics some eight years ago. I remember the exhilarating feeling of opening a comic and being captivated by the story within. That memory was recently tucked into a corner of my mind until ACTION #646 brought out that feeling again. Once again, I have found myself captivated by great storytelling. Thanks for making it seem like the first time.

Paul Willis
Los Angeles, CA

Well, Paul, I guess it's true that you never forget your first time...

Dear Mike:

Superman vs. a 300 million-year-old gargantuan fanged worm-monster? Well, no real complaints if we can wait equally as long for a rematch.

In what was admittedly a fill-in, you tried something different. While it's not exactly what I'm looking for on a regular

basis, the story managed to have its moments. Most successful were Keith Giffen's ultra-dramatic poses and silhouettes. True, style occasionally overwhelmed consistency, what with Superman's chest insignia ballooning in various panels. Even so, as a limited one-time-only deal, it's nice to see different interpretations of Superman. But keep the Ordway version as your current prototype. This shadowy business is more suited to Batman—at least this week—until the readers find him too grim (as if in tandem such a thing could be possible).

Our kinder, gentler, more humane Superman first searched for a way to communicate with the alien, then consigned himself, initially, to defensive measures. Finally, he cut loose and justified the title of this comic: it's ACTION, not "Unlimited Patience."

Still, for all his good intentions, the end result was a rain of worm particulates, enough to catch a few hundred, thousand fish. Apparently, space-worm stomach enzymes and heat vision do not mix, always something to keep in mind. While the creature's death was inadvertent, I hope we won't be seeing too many frozen tears or speed-out guilt trips this time. I like a thinking hero who, while not swaggeringly cocky, at least is sure of himself. Questioning and modifying behavior is fine—everyone strives to improve—but the guy who put the super in super-hero shouldn't ever be so prone to over-analyze that he hesitates to act for fear that perhaps a sixth rethinking is in order before he dares to use his potentially dangerous power.

Perhaps now, after a shower and some grub, Superman can tackle other big worms like Lex Luthor and Morgan Edge, once the very real repercussions from this story abate.

Joe Frank
2700 N. Hayden Road #3020
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

Dear Editor:

I've been quietly picking up ACTION since it returned to its old format. Every time there's a delay in scheduling (which has been happening too often, grumble, gripe), I find myself heading to Metropolis and good ol' Supes. The real Man of Steel is making a comeback, thanks to Perez and Jurgens, with some help from Stern and Ordway. Superman's more sure of himself, has a tear-proof suit, and seems more regal of late. Moreover, Luthor has receded into the background, Jimmy Olsen is elastic, and

Morgan Edge is back. There's a fortress coming soon, and the red "S" has never been bigger. If only Lois's hair would return to its old black.

"Burial Ground" brought a second reason for my purchase: Wunderkind Keith Giffen. As a fan of JLA and LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES, I don't usually pass up Giff's work. Here, Giff plugs Supes into a standard plot (Ostrander used something similar in FIRESTORM with the Zuggeraut) and provides stunning art and enough twists to make the journey a worthwhile one. Stern's scripting is returning to the high level it was at when he worked on another company's JLA rip-off and on a certain web-spinner. All through it, Superman stayed calm, almost stoic, retaining a small sense of wonder and an air of responsibility. Good job all around.

The art is noteworthy for its nine-frame style and its occasional big picture. It's a welcome change from the usual style, and it's good to see Keith experimenting with different forms. I liked the brief reference to the JLA's secret origin. Continuity nuts like myself will ask: What about JLA #200? Rather than disregard that classic, let's suggest that either Supes doesn't recall a second fight due to an alien brainwashing, or that's what Supes is referring to when he says "some years ago." Either way, it seems odd that Supes, despite his involvement with the Justice League(s) over its careers, never learned the truth from Green Lantern or J'onn J'onzz.

That's all from here. I regret to say that I can't afford to add ACTION to my list of monthlies, despite its return to excellence. There's too much good stuff already absorbing my cash. But whenever there's an extra 75c in my pocket (what'sa bargain!), I'll stop by. In the meantime, see you in Metropolis.

Simon DelMonte
Apt. 204
32-43 90th Street
Queens, NY 11369

Our goal, Simon, is to keep producing stories of such excellence in ACTION that you'll be forced to re-evaluate your buying priorities and add us to your monthly comics list.

Dear Mike:

Re: ACTION COMICS #646
"Burial Ground," wasn't too bad. I hope George recovers and returns to ACTION quite soon.

Also, why was the lettercol published in reverse? Are you:

1) trying to start a new trend, or
2) did a Bizarro gremlin do this?
See ya at Munden's.

Uncle Elvis
17850 Dawson Road
Dawson Springs, KY 42408
P.S. I like the new lettercol title.

Would you believe we published the lettercol pages out of order for the benefit of our Japanese readership? Nah, I didn't think so. When we recognized the problem with the reversed letters pages, our faces really turned red. Apparently, our printer was remiss in his responsibilities, resulting in our rearranged readers' pages. He has been reprimanded and reassures us that he will remember proper lettercol requirements in the future. (And we rejoiced once we realized that no one requested a refund because of this regrettable goof. How refreshing!)

Dear Mike:

When it was announced that Keith Giffen would do a Superman story for ACTION COMICS, I was filled with (glee? high hopes?) dread. While some of his early Superman stories were fun to read (with the Ambush Bug stories being some of the most insane/funny/comical/bizarre pieces this side of Zippy), most of his later Superman tales were tedious in both art and story.

So "Burial Ground" proved to be a surprise. Basically, it was just Superman versus a space worm with two pages of prologue to set things up, and one page added to further the Brainiac subplot. But Giffen and Roger Stern didn't tip their hands too soon or allow for things to get silly with Superman behaving like one of those "stupor-heroes" in the Justice Leagues. The writing on page three was wonderful, harkening back to Superman's early years and Jerry Siegel's purple prose.

The artwork was much better than the last few stories that Giffen drew in ACTION COMICS. There wasn't any covering of Superman's face with a dark shadow as had been done before. This time, the use of shadows and dark panels was done well to heighten the storytelling. Dennis Janke gave the right spin to Keith's pencils through his inking, letting Giffen's current style shine.

The coloring by Glenn Whitmore was very good, with his use of shading to suggest light shadows, and I liked the coloring of the aliens' dialogue to show us who was saying what. Then there was the lettering by Bill Oakley which was good; however, the white-on-black portion on page three was hard to read.

So until the next AMBUSH BUG mini-series, I remain sincerely yours...

Hurricane Heersn
15908 Sherman Way #5
Van Nuys, CA 91406

We're glad ACTION #646 overcame your initial feeling of dread, Hurricane. Glenn and Bill, whose superlative work is often overlooked, thank you for your praise. And don't hold your breath for another AMBUSH BUG mini-series—Keith Giffen tells us that the A.B. story in SECRET ORIGINS #48 is his swan song

on the character!

.....

Dear Super-guys:

Superman has always been one of my favorite characters in comics, but most of his older stories were pretty poor and didn't interest me at all. Then came the revamping of Superman a little of three years ago. I followed the John Byrne stories and found the artwork great and the stories good, but something—I don't know what—was missing. Once John left, so did I. But I hadn't abandoned Superman, the character—him I still believed in; I just left his titles.

Then along came this past summer and I heard from friends how the Superman titles had turned around—the stories were great, the artwork was great, and the excitement was back. So I decided to try the books again, and my friends were right. This is the Superman I know! The current creative teams on all of the Superman titles are superb and are crafting absolutely great stories, as are the guest creators like Keith Giffen in this issue of ACTION COMICS (#646). I wish you all continued success and I'm looking forward to future issues of ACTION and all the other Superman titles.

Matthew D. Spatola
4122 Millbrook Road
Mount Joy, PA 17652

P.S. Any chance of Flash, Captain Marvel, or Green Lantern guest shots?

It's always rewarding to have a former reader return to the fold—welcome back, Matthew!

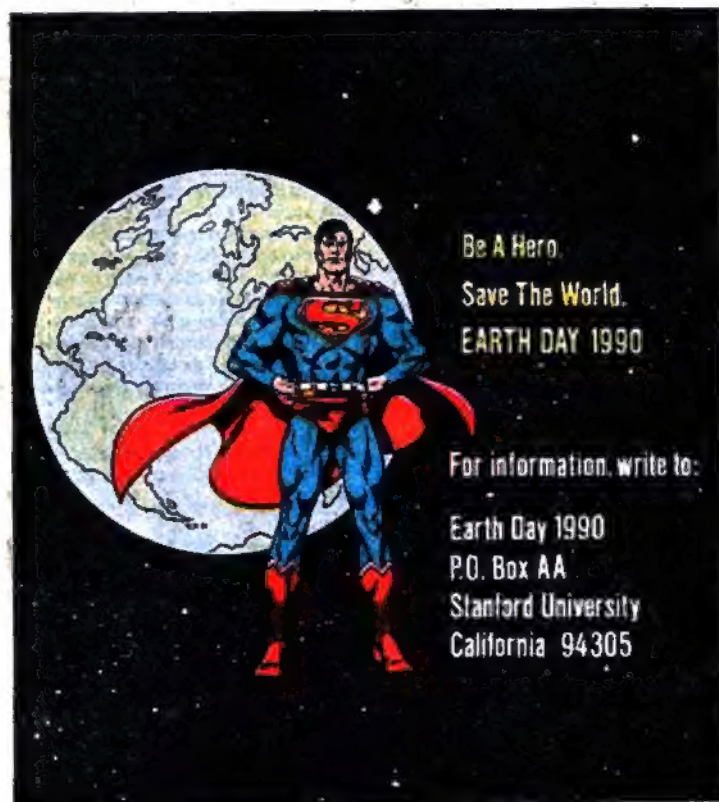
Now, about those team-ups: You just saw Flash race Superman this month over in ADVENTURES. Maybe Green Lantern will pop up sometime in the future, and for Captain Marvel—Oh-oh ... here come those darned next issue boxes. That's all we have room for now ... so, 'bye till next month...

—Michael Eury

NEXT MONTH: in SUPERMAN #42 Death-Rite comes to Earth ... that's Draga to you readers who've been with us for a while ... and he's got revenge on his not-so-hidden agenda! Jerry Ordway and Dennis Janke bring you "The Day of the Krypton-Man" Part Four in just fourteen days!

NEXT MONTH: in ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN #465 Clark Kent gets fired from his new job, he loses his apartment, and his Pa is really angry with him! Weird thing is, none of these things seem to bother the new Superman! Dan Jurgens and Art Thibert write and draw "The Day of the Krypton-Man" Part Five in just twenty-one days!

NEXT MONTH: in ACTION COMICS #652 Ma and Pa Kent make their first trip to Metropolis to "teach that ingrate Clark a lesson!" But Clark Kent may be lost to them forever—since the Erudicator's Krypton-Man has apparently taken over Superman completely! Roger Stern, George Perez, Kerry Gammill, and Brett Breeding do the honors on the closing chapter of "The Day of the Krypton-Man" in thirty days!



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Save The World.
EARTH DAY 1990

For information, write to:
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